



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 2, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Susan Golub, Manager, Policy and Performance Unit
Subject: Community Center Strategic Plan

Requested Board Action

Seattle Parks and Recreation recently completed the Community Center Strategic Plan. (The Plan is available here: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/ccstrategicplan/>) SPR is not asking the Board for a yes/no recommendation on the Plan; rather we are asking the Board for comments and insights based on the Board's long-time interest and participation in developing the Plan. As of Friday, September 2, we have not finalized the public comment process for the Plan. More information will be provided soon which will inform the timing for the Board's discussion.

Project Background

Seattle Parks and Recreation operates 26 community centers with a total budget of \$12.9 million. The overarching goals for community centers, as established in the Parks Legacy Plan are:

- Ensure community centers are the focal points in our neighborhoods and serve as places where people can connect, foster relationships, build community, enhance their health and well-being by offering programs, activities, and events to Seattle's changing population.
- Ensure community centers are physically and emotionally safe and welcoming places for individual enrichment and community growth.

The Community Center Strategic Plan accomplishes these goals through proposals to reduce costs, increase access and embrace partnerships.

The initial impetus to prepare a Community Center Strategic Plan arose when the City Council moved \$1.3 million in Park District community center operating funds into the community center capital redevelopment initiative, with the stipulation that the Council would be willing to consider returning the funds to operations after development of a strategic plan. The Council also passed two statements of legislative intent (SLIs) that are responded to in the Community Center Strategic Plan:

Lake City (2014)

Request for a report outlining the next steps for improvements at the Lake City community center, including a schedule for implementing the preferred option.

Capitol Hill (2015)

Requests that the Community Center Strategic Plan examine the needs of the Capitol Hill neighborhood and how the Miller Community Center could help meet the recreation and social needs of this community. Also requests for information for all 26 centers around demographics, needs, and identification of service gaps and identification of barriers to centers providing equitable access and opportunity.

Key Recommendations

Racial and social equity underpin community center operations: centers are the equalizers in our City, giving *all* people a place to play, learn, connect, engage in healthy activities, meet and celebrate with their neighbors. The Plan addresses equity through the following proposals, summarized in Attachment A.

1. Meet community needs by increasing staffing and hours of operations: Hours and staffing are increased in centers where the neighborhood has fewer resources to pay for programming, where residents have fewer recreational options and where centers need more hours to adequately serve their communities.
 - a) Add staff capacity at 9 centers: Alki, Belltown, Bitter Lake, Delridge, Green Lake, Jefferson, Laurelhurst, Rainier Beach, Rainier.
 - Improves participant/staff ratios, including conversion of some part-time staff to full-time to support the development of new programming, and pursuit of community partnerships
 - b) Extend operating hours at 6 centers to provide more community access: International District/Chinatown, Magnuson, Miller, South Park, Van Asselt, Yesler (See Attachment B)
2. Test new ideas through innovations and pilot projects:
 - a) Nine to ten recreational programs each quarter will be free at five centers to increase equity and access to recreation opportunities.
 - The centers are Bitter Lake, Garfield, Rainier Beach, South Park, and Van Asselt.
 - b) Partnerships will expand operating hours at some centers and will provide increased programming. This model will be started at Queen Anne and Ballard, centers with high-demand, high community resources, and a high number of non-public hours, and will leverage private/community resources to fund expanded hours.
 - c) SPR will explore opportunities for the contract management of the Green Lake Community Center's operations and programming to a non-profit organization. This organization would be expected to raise private donations to improve and upgrade the facility, addressing extensive facility needs that would be very difficult to cover with public funding. In exchange for this capital investment, our partner would gain the opportunity to operate the center according to guidelines established by SPR in adherence to our Mission and role as a public agency serving the Seattle community.
 - d) The concept of program hubs will be explored, with the goal of identifying centers as having a specific programming focus, such as seniors, teens or adult enrichment.
3. Make needed system-wide improvements focused on increased effectiveness, equity, and community engagement and responsiveness: The comprehensive review of community center operations identified the following proposed changes:

- e) Eliminate drop-in fees. Currently people pay a \$3.00 drop-in fee for activities like playing basketball or using the toddler gym or fitness center.
- f) Simplify scholarship applications processes.
- g) Design a performance system to create metrics, collect data, and evaluate strategies to determine what works and what doesn't.
- h) Implement changes regarding the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), SPR's key recreation partner, including changes to advisory councils and advisory council budgeting. A key recommendation is to pool surplus Advisory Council funds. Currently surplus funds stay with the individual Advisory Councils resulting in inequities between centers.
- i) Fund professional development for staff.

Facility Needs:

Initiative 1.2 (Community Center Rehabilitation and Development) of the Park District's financial plan includes approximately \$4.3 million annually during years 2 – 6 of the first six years of the Park District cycle. This includes the \$1.3 million moved from Initiative 3.1 (Restore Community Center Operations). SPR is proposing restoring the \$1.3 million back to operations to fund the recommendations listed above, leaving approximately \$3 million a year for facility improvements (about \$16 million total during the first 6-year cycle).

SPR identified eight community centers that had not received capital funding from the previous two park levies and conducted architectural and engineering studies for these centers. Based on these studies, two centers, Green Lake and Lake City, need replacement rather than redevelopment, at an estimated cost of \$42 million. Additionally, the cost to fully renovate the other six centers is \$21 million, resulting in a total current need of \$63 million.

As this need far outstrips the funding available, SPR is focusing on the most pressing major maintenance needs at six centers, as well as on emerging facility needs to support programming innovations.

Exhibit 1: Major Maintenance and Facility Need Estimates

Center	Cost
Hiawatha CC	\$1.2M
Jefferson CC	\$1.2M
Loyal Heights CC	\$3.7M
Magnolia CC	\$2.8M
Queen Anne CC	\$1.6M
South Park CC	\$1.4M
Planning	\$100-\$200k
Emerging Needs*	\$3.5M
Total Available	\$16M

* Emerging Needs are driven by programming needs, including innovations and pilot projects.

Long Term Planning

SPR will undertake a comprehensive long-term planning process in 2017-2018 for the entire Parks and Recreation system. This system-level plan will consider how SPR can best use all of its assets, including community centers, pools, parks, and trails to serve the Seattle community. This plan will build on the work of the Legacy Plan, with additional public input, and will include evaluation of the community center innovations and pilot projects started in this Strategic Plan.

As part of this effort, SPR will undertake a more extensive assessment of capital needs for all centers following a comprehensive programming study, to be initiated in 2017. The programming recommendations will be the driver for future facility improvements. The outcome will be a comprehensive 20- to 30-year program master plan that will inform all capital and programmatic investments system-wide. As part of this effort, SPR will establish a funding strategy to best meet system-wide operations and facility needs, including significant capital needs that have been identified in our community centers and other open-space and recreational facilities. This will inform the next round of funding through the Park District, considering options such as bond financing to best address our significant needs.

SPR will also invest some capital dollars in facility assessment and planning so it can begin the pending system-wide planning process with an understanding of facility needs.

Public Involvement Process

Capturing public input on the Community Center Strategic Plan has come through a variety of avenues:

- 1) mini summit community meeting in June 2015
- 2) teen focus group in July 2015
- 3) outreach survey,
- 4) the Superintendent's listening tour,
- 5) a staff group analysis for the Racial Equity Toolkit, and
- 6) the Park Board's two-year involvement.

The Board played a significant role in the development of the Strategic Plan, receiving briefings and providing input on June 26, 2014, February 12, 2015, October 8, 2015, and March 10, 2016. The Board's retreat in August 2014 focused on community centers.

Additional opportunities for the public to comment on the Plan are being developed and will be announced soon.

Additional Information

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<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/ccstrategicplan/>

Attachment A. Summary of Operating Recommendations by Community Center

Center	Increased Staffing	Increased Hours	Equity & Access Pilot	Expanded Partnerships
Alki	✓			✓
Ballard	✓			✓
Belltown*	✓			✓
Bitter Lake	✓		✓	
Delridge	✓			
Garfield			✓	
Green Lake	✓			✓
International District	✓	✓		
Jefferson	✓			
Laurelhurst	✓			✓
Magnuson	✓	✓		
Miller	✓	✓		
Queen Anne				✓
Rainier	✓			
Rainier Beach	✓		✓	
South Park	✓	✓	✓	
Van Asselt	✓	✓	✓	
Yesler	✓	✓		

Note: Under Expanded Partnerships, this table shows only financial and operating partnerships. Many community centers will have expanded programming partnerships. All centers will benefit from other system-wide improvements, including eliminating drop-in fees and professional development for staff.

*The current lease at Belltown expires at the end of 2018. SPR is exploring options for the Belltown community.

Attachment B. Operating Hours Recommendation: Current and Proposed Hours

Center	Current Hours	Proposed Change	Additional Hours/ Week
International District/ Chinatown	Monday, Friday: 11am-9pm Tuesday: 3-6pm Wednesday: 12-9pm Thursday: 11am-2pm Sat-Sun: closed	Monday-Friday 10am-8pm	20
Magnuson	Monday-Friday: 9am-2pm Saturday-Sunday: closed	Monday-Friday 9am-9pm	35
Miller	Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 4-9pm Tuesday, Thursday: 9:30am-2:30pm Saturday-Sunday: closed	Monday-Friday 1-9pm	15
South Park	Monday-Thursday: 12-8pm Friday: 12-7pm Saturday: 9am-3pm Sunday: closed	Monday-Friday 10am-9pm	18
Van Asselt	Monday-Friday: 3-8pm Saturday-Sunday: closed	Monday-Friday 12-8pm Saturday, 9am-3pm	20
Yesler	Monday-Thursday: 1-9pm Friday: 1-7pm Saturday: 10am-5pm Sunday: closed	Monday-Friday 10am-9pm	17